

or what became of his ill-gotten gains. The documentary unfortunately wastes much of its running time comparing Madoff to the legendary scammer Carlo Ponzi (source of the expression "Ponzi scheme"), even though the two men actually shared little in common in regards to either their personal or professional histories. Additionally, the film offers no satisfactory explanation of why the Securities and Exchange Commission ignored complaints for years about Madoff's operation (and no one from the SEC is interviewed here). A bonus History Channel-aired documentary, *Crash: The Next Great Depression*, offers a thumbnail sketch of how the mortgage market meltdown helped push the U.S. economy into a recession, but doesn't cover events beyond November 2008. Not recommended. Aud: P. (P. Hall)

We All Fall Down: The American Mortgage Crisis ★★★

(2009) 65 min. DVD: \$398. Icarus Films. Closed captioned. PPR.

Gary Gasparth's timely documentary *We All Fall Down* presents an informative primer on the reasons behind the U.S. housing market collapse in 2008, which in turn precipitated the unraveling of the global economy. Combining archival and

newly-filmed footage, well-chosen graphics, and insightful expert interviews, the film traces the evolution of the mortgage business, originally handled by local companies run on personal knowledge, careful analysis, and trust, but later controlled by huge, impersonal national institutions that not only prized quantity over quality but also devised mechanisms of bundling loans into financial instruments that could be traded like stocks and bonds. Along the way, *We All Fall Down* explains economic jargon such as "subprime" and "securitization" in layman terms, as it paints a sad portrait of greed, self-deception, and arrogance—one that apports blame fairly, targeting unscrupulous mortgage brokers and heedless lenders, but also incompetent regulators, politicians who encouraged reckless policies (out of blindness, ambition, or both), and even individuals who jumped at deals that a thoughtful person should have realized carried enormous risk. The film personalizes the crisis by including interviews with some of the meltdown's victims, people who are desperately struggling to hold onto their homes in the face of the foreclosure tidal wave sweeping the country. Offering a clear, concise, and at times emotionally wrenching explanation of a national tragedy, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

The Matador ★★★1/2

(2008) 75 min. DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98. City Lights Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Regardless of your position on bullfighting—for many, it's either a beautiful, balletic ritual or an abhorrent, outdated form of brutality—*The Matador* will dazzle you with the sights and sounds of Spain's most majestic cultural tradition. Indeed, this film—which follows David Fandila's three-year quest to become Spain's greatest bullfighter—may be the finest ever made about bullfighting and matadors. Known as "El Fandi" to legions of admirers throughout Spain and Latin America, Fandila was obsessed since boyhood with the goal of joining the elite "100 Club" of matadors who've won 100 *corridos* (or bullfights) in a single season. Skillfully directed by Stephen Higgins, *The Matador* follows Fandila through three seasons (2003-05) on the grueling Spanish bullfighting circuit, culminating in an astonishing sequence in which Fandila must conquer six bulls in one match. Along the way, Fandila experiences a variety of highs and lows, including the injuries from goring that all matadors accept



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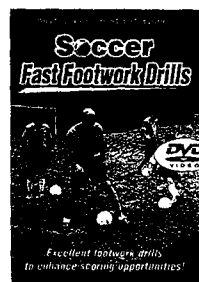
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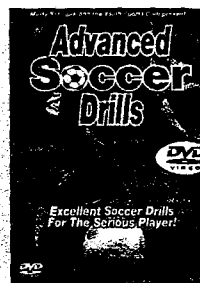
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